

The Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) role in public transportation varies widely as directed by law and policy. The agency:

- Manages several federal and state grant programs.
- Maintains, operates, and builds freeway high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes and access ramps.
- Develops and maintains park and ride lots.
- Implements commute trip reduction (CTR) laws.
- Sponsors and develops Amtrak *Cascades* intercity passenger rail service.
- Provides technical assistance to support transit, ridesharing, and transportation demand management.

WSDOT supports public transportation to foster more efficient use of transportation systems, economic vitality, safety, and environmental protection.

Following is more detailed information about WSDOT programs that support public transportation.

Grants

Section 5311 Grants

The Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Section 5311 grant program helps provide general public transportation in rural areas of Washington State. Section 5311 refers to Section 5311 of the Federal Transit Act, authorized in TEA-21. Public transportation providers in rural areas are eligible to receive capital assistance (vehicles, shelters, and equipment) and operating assistance from this program.

WSDOT's Public Transportation Office seeks competitive applications for federal funding grants for public transportation in rural areas. Capital grant assistance requires a local match of at least 20 percent.

Operations grant assistance requires a local match of at least 50 percent. Grant recipients may not use revenue from fares as local match. The next period for these grants will be July 2003 to June 2005.

How many requests for Section 5311 funding were received?

By July 31, 2001, WSDOT received 24 applications seeking Section 5311 funds totaling over \$5.7 million in requests. FTA apportioned WSDOT approximately \$6 million for the Section 5311 program for an 18-month period (January 2002 to June 2003). Out of those funds, FTA required WSDOT to set aside:

- \$913,460 for intercity bus purposes (Section 5311(f)).
- \$99,351 for the Rural Transportation Assistance Program.
- \$913,460 for program administration and planning.

This left approximately \$4 million for projects statewide.

What Section 5311 grants were awarded for 18 months beginning on January 1, 2002?

WSDOT's Public Transportation Office funded 21 projects: four for capital purchases and 17 for operating assistance. Though the projects were distributed statewide, the majority of operating projects were located in eastern Washington.

The Grants Awarded table in the appendix identifies the Section 5311 grants awarded for this period.

What is WSDOT's role in the Section 5311 grant program?

WSDOT's Public Transportation Office (PTO) is the administrator of the Section 5311 grant program. In this capacity, the office assembles and submits applications to FTA and administers contracts for grants with local public transportation providers — including monitoring their compliance with federal regulations.

WSDOT's Public Transportation Office is responsible for ensuring that grant contractors comply with FTA's Drug and Alcohol regulations. Oversight responsibilities include providing ongoing training to providers' managers and other safety-sensitive employees. The office conducts training sessions on such topics as: familiarizing contractors with the regulations, reasonable suspicion training for supervisors, training for third party administrators and collection sites, and acceptable random sampling procedures.

WSDOT Public Transportation Office staff monitors contractors' records keeping by making visits locally. The staff also oversees contractors' purchases of vehicles, shelters, and equipment that are funded as capital assistance. In the interest of reducing redundancy and expediting purchases of vehicles, WSDOT's Public Transportation Office coordinated two statewide purchases in 2001 — one for four heavy-duty buses including those funded through Section 5309 and one for minibuses funded by Section 5311, Section 5310, and Section 5309.

Section 5311(f) — Intercity Bus Grants

The Intercity Bus grant program is part of FTA's Section 5311 grant program. It sets aside 15 percent of a state's annual funding for grants to "carry out a program for the development and support of intercity bus transportation." For this program, intercity service is defined as "regularly scheduled bus service for the general public that operates with limited stops over fixed routes connecting two or more urban places not in close proximity, and which may make meaningful connections with scheduled intercity bus service to more distant points." Grants may be for capital assistance (vehicles, equipment, shelters, etc.) or operating assistance.

WSDOT's Public Transportation Office manages the Section 5311(f) Intercity Bus Grant Program as part of the Section 5311 Grant Program. The Grants Awarded table in the appendix identifies the Section 5311(f) Intercity Bus grants awarded under Program Quick Start for the 2001-2003 biennium and those intercity projects awarded for the

period January 2002 to June 2003. Program Quick Start was made available to private, for-profit intercity bus carriers only. It enabled intercity carriers to apply for 5311(f) funding in conjunction with their Rural Mobility grant application to assist them in meeting the federal match requirements.

Rural Mobility Grants

The Rural Mobility Grant Program also helps provide general public transportation in rural areas of Washington State. Historically, this program often has helped local agencies demonstrate new services in areas of the state lacking organized public transportation services. WSDOT's Public Transportation Office awards biennial grants based upon competitive applications accepted in the spring, every *other* year. March 30, 2001, was the deadline for receipt of applications for the next two years' funding.

Public transportation providers in rural areas receive both capital assistance (vehicles, shelters, etc.) and operating assistance from this program. Some grants use this funding to match Section 5311 or Section 5311(f) grants. Grant applications for either capital or operations require no local match, although match is encouraged. The program has grown from \$1.5 million in 1993 to \$3.3 million for the FY 2001-2003 biennium ending June 30, 2003. Requests for funding always exceed the amount of money available.

WSDOT received 48 applications, totaling over \$11 million, in 2001. Grant money primarily went toward operating general public, fixed route deviated, and/or demand response transportation in rural areas. Several grants provided intercity service, connecting communities to communities. Many of these were major demonstration projects with the goal of serving as an impetus for permanent rural transportation solutions. The Grants Awarded table in the appendix identifies the Rural Mobility grants awarded for FFY 2002. A map depicting the locations of these projects appears later in this section.

Section 5310 Grants

Annually, WSDOT's Public Transportation Office seeks competitive applications for grants of federal funding for transportation of elderly persons and persons with disabilities throughout Washington State. Private non-profit organizations are the primary agencies eligible to apply for this funding. Capital grant assistance and specified purchases of services require a local match of at least 20 percent. Grant recipients may not use revenue from fares as local match.

How many requests for funding were received?

By July 31, 2001, WSDOT's Public Transportation Office received 16 applications seeking Section 5310 capital funds totaling about \$2.1 million in requests for funding during the period January 2002 to June 2003. WSDOT received 12 proposals totaling \$949,800 for FFY 2002 5310 Purchase of Services contracts. The WSDOT budget for the 5310 Grant Program is approximately \$2 million.

What Section 5310 grants and contracts were awarded?

WSDOT's Public Transportation Office funded 21 projects: 13 for capital purchases and eight for annual Purchases of Services contracts. The Grants Awarded table in the appendix identifies the Section 5310 grants and contracts awarded.

What is WSDOT's role in the Section 5310 grant program?

WSDOT is the administrator of the Section 5310 grant program. In this capacity, WSDOT's Public Transportation Office assembles and submits applications to FTA and administers contracts for grants with local agencies in the same manner as done with the Section 5311 grant program. Agency staff monitors contractors' records keeping by making visits locally. Agency staff also oversees contractors' purchases of vehicles, shelters, and equipment that are funded as capital assistance. WSDOT's Public Transportation Office coordinated a statewide purchase in 2001 for 15 minibuses funded by Section 5310 in conjunction with the Section 5311 Program.

Section 5309 Bus Discretionary Grants

Congress identifies projects for Section 5309 bus discretionary funding in its annual appropriations for transportation and related agencies. Funding becomes available with federal appropriations effective October 1. This capital grant assistance requires a local match of at least 20 percent. Grant recipients may not use revenue from fares as local match. Beginning in 2000, WSDOT's Public Transportation Office sought projects from transportation providers in rural areas and submitted them to Washington State's U.S. senators and members of Congress for consideration.

In 2001, WSDOT received interest from eight providers. They sought approximately \$4.4 million for 31 buses and minibuses. WSDOT's Public Transportation Office packaged this into a WSDOT request to Congress. Congress responded by setting aside \$1.2 million for WSDOT to administer contracts for grants to purchase 14 buses and minibuses with four providers. Congress also approved a direct grant for \$0.4 million to Grant Transit Authority who participated in WSDOT's request.

WSDOT's Public Transportation Office assembles and submits applications to FTA and administers contracts for grants with local agencies in the same manner as done with the Section 5311 grant program. Agency staff monitor contractors' records keeping by making visits locally and oversee contractors' purchases of vehicles.

Planning and Related Grants

WSDOT's Public Transportation Office coordinates the preparation of local six-year transit development plans. Section 35.58.2795 RCW stipulates this requirement, but provides neither funding nor administrative rulemaking. These plans are the basis for this summary.

WSDOT's Public Transportation Office verifies the financial feasibility of FTA funded projects in the statewide transportation improvement program (STIP). Projects listed in the STIP are the only ones that the

Federal Highway Administration and FTA can approve to make federal funding grants. The STIP is a three-year, fiscally constrained, and prioritized program of transportation projects, compiled from local and regional plans, which provides a backbone for developing projects for the intermodal transportation network in the state of Washington.

Annually, WSDOT seeks competitive applications for grants of federal funding for planning projects associated with general public transportation in rural areas of Washington State. Public transportation providers in rural areas are the agencies eligible to apply for this funding. Funding for the applications selected, Section 5313, becomes available with federal appropriations effective October 1. Planning projects require a local match of at least 20 percent. WSDOT selected four projects for funding in 2002:

- Clallam Transit to evaluate radio communications — \$30,000
- Douglas County for metropolitan planning organization transitional planning — \$70,000
- Island Transit for design of an expanded maintenance and operations facility — \$35,000
- Pullman Transit to assess a Washington State University campus shuttle system — \$26,000

High Capacity Transportation Grants

WSDOT no longer administers planning grants that facilitate high capacity transportation development. Although high capacity transportation planning is authorized in Chapters 81.104 and 81.112 RCW, its funding source was eliminated with the Motor Vehicle Excise Tax. Consequently, funding available to continue high capacity transportation planning discontinued on June 30, 2001. Funding was available only for the Clark County and Spokane County projects, which are managed respectively by the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council and the Spokane Regional Transportation Council.

Vancouver/Clark County

Work continued on the I-5 high occupancy vehicle (HOV) Lane Public Information and Education Plan. This plan supports the WSDOT, regional, and bi-state decision to open a southbound HOV lane on I-5 in the Fall of 2001. As an I-5 widening project underway nears completion in Vancouver, an HOV lane was added southbound between 99th Street and Mill Plain Boulevard. It operates during the morning commute providing a more reliable trip for carpoolers and bus riders heading to Portland for work — enhancing the connection between Washington and Oregon.

Spokane/South Valley Light Rail Project

The Spokane Regional Transportation Council continued with the South Valley light rail environmental assessment work. The corridor proposed for use consists mostly of approximately 16 miles of abandoned railroad right of way between downtown Spokane and Liberty Lake to the east. Spokane Transit Authority assumed the environmental impact statement phase for the project late in the year.

Seattle Monorail Project

In November 2000, Seattle's voters passed Initiative 53. In response, Seattle established the Elevated Transportation Company (ETC), a public development authority, to develop a monorail plan for public referendum in November 2002. ETC identified several monorail corridors. After public hearings, ETC chose the Ballard/Downtown/West Seattle corridor as the initial corridor of the monorail system. Enabling legislation was drafted for consideration by the 2002 State Legislature.

Section 5307 Program

WSDOT is the designated recipient for FTA Section 5307 Formula Program for Urbanized Areas in smaller urbanized areas. These areas currently are: Bellingham, Longview, Olympia, Kennewick/Richland, and Yakima. WSDOT's Public Transportation Office oversees the use of these funds for projects.

Supporting the Development of New Transit Authorities

WSDOT's Public Transportation Office staff meets with local officials to help improve transit options in those areas of the state. Much of this assistance is associated with Rural Mobility Grant Program recipients in an effort to make them more self-sufficient. However, much of the state incentive for local communities to accept taxes to support public transportation was lost with the removal of the State Motor Vehicle Excise Tax and its revenues.

Yakima County

Yakima County has the state's largest area without governmental public transit service. According to the Office of Financial Management, of the state's nearly 724,000 residents without access to governmental public transit, 20 percent live in Yakima County. In September 1994, voters of Yakima County rejected a ballot proposition extending, countywide, the .3% transit sales tax collected in the city of Yakima. Subsequently, the public transportation benefit area reduced its boundaries to the city of Yakima and three suburban county precincts. The governing board changed as well, to two Yakima city council members and a county commissioner. The governing board meets about twice a year.

Representatives of many of the county's social service agencies meet periodically to discuss the need for increased service in the county. They seek to expand the board's perspective on areas for possible service and another ballot proposition. WSDOT staff participated at meetings of both the board and the social service agencies.

Klickitat County

The Klickitat County Public Transportation Benefit Area serves most of the central and western areas of the county funded by a combination of grants. In November 1998, voters turned down the .2 % sales tax dedication for public transportation. The board of directors met occasionally. WSDOT staff participated at these meetings.

Six-Year Transit Development Plans

WSDOT's Public Transportation Office staff coordinates the preparation of local six-year transit development plans. Section 35.58.2795 RCW stipulates this requirement, but provides neither funding to pay for developing plans nor administrative rule-making authority to WSDOT. Removing the State Motor Vehicle Excise Tax and its revenue caused significant reductions in the staffs of all transit systems. In spite of any association between these plans and state funding through, transit systems continued to cooperate.

Annual Public Transportation Conference

WSDOT's Public Transportation Office hosts an annual statewide conference for professional people interested in developments in the public transportation industry. Typically, this conference is in the fall and extends over three days. Workshops for attendees occur concurrently, often as many as seven. Historically, it has alternated between sites in eastern and western Washington. This conference provides an opportunity for:

- Several associations, notably the Washington State Transit Association, Community Transportation Association – Northwest, and Womens' Transportation Seminar, to meet;
- Vendors to display products and equipment; and
- Bus and van roadeo competition for drivers and maintenance service teams.

The 2001 conference was October 8-10, held in Wenatchee. About 400 people attended the conference. The next conference, also in Wenatchee, is scheduled for September 16-18, 2002.

Facilities

High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes

There are currently 198 lane-miles of freeway High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes open to carpools, vanpools, buses, and motorcycles in the Puget Sound region and 4 miles in Vancouver. These HOV facilities are located on segments of Interstates 5, 90, and 405, and on State Routes 167 and 520. Since 1990, the region's freeway HOV system has grown by over 400 percent. WSDOT planned a Puget Sound Core Freeway HOV Lane System totaling 297 lane-miles. In addition to the HOV lanes already open, there are 7 additional lane-miles currently under construction. Another 35 lane-miles are being designed, however, most of these do not have funding for lane construction. The remaining 57 lane-miles in the Puget Sound Core Freeway HOV Lane System remain in the planning stage, awaiting design and construction funding.

The Washington State Transportation Commission and WSDOT have made a commitment through *Washington's Transportation Plan* to complete the Puget Sound Core Freeway HOV Lane System by the year 2015; or earlier if funding becomes available. It will take about \$1.65 billion to complete the HOV Core Program.

In the Puget Sound region, virtually all regional plans and local comprehensive plans support completion of the regional freeway HOV system. In contrast, few new general-purpose highway lanes are proposed. HOV lanes support state Commute Trip Reduction and federal and state Air Quality goals for the region. HOV lanes continue to be a central feature in the strategy to accommodate growth in travel without incurring additional vehicle trips.

An HOV lane began operation in Clark County on I-5 on October 29. This lane provides an HOV connection between Vancouver and the Portland metropolitan region (please see Vancouver/Clark County high capacity transportation planning information below). A regional HOV system study showed that I-5 had the highest levels of traffic congestion in the region, and that freeway HOV lanes could provide significant travel time-savings to carpools, vanpools, and transit riders. It looked at the feasibility of operating a bi-state HOV facility in the I-5 corridor and concluded that this was a viable option. The state of Oregon currently operates a northbound HOV lane on I-5 through Portland to the Columbia River bridge. During the peak-period, this HOV lane carries twice as many people as the other two northbound lanes.

Park and Ride Lots

At the close of 2001, the statewide public park and ride lot system consisted of approximately 305 lots offering 38,605 parking spaces to commuters and other motorists. The table, "Publicly Funded Park and Ride Lots" shows where these lots are. Almost 80 percent of these lots are in the Puget Sound region. According to the Puget Sound Regional Council, Pierce County accounted for over a 119 percent increase in new capacity in the region from 1999 to 2001. It is estimated that on any weekday, over 80 percent of these spaces are full. Larger park and ride lots with the highest utilization included: I-5/512 in Lakewood, South Bellevue, Green Lake, Northgate, and Lynnwood.

Washington State began operating its first park and ride lot at the Northgate Mall in north Seattle in the early 1970s to support the Blue Streak express bus service from Northgate to downtown Seattle. A recent study conducted by WSDOT identified a need for more than 15,000 **additional** park and ride stalls in King County by 2030. Clark, Spokane, and Thurston County studies also show increasing demand for park and ride facilities. In addition to capacity deficiencies, especially in urban areas of the state, other key park and ride lot challenges include building consensus about who should pay for new park and ride facilities, lack of revenues, and difficulty in finding suitable sites mutually acceptable to local communities and the state.

**WSDOT Park and Ride Inventory
Updated 1/02**

WSDOT Region	County	Number of Lots	Number of Stalls
Northwest	Island	7	893
	King	113	19,289
	San Juan	2	67
	Skagit	7	314
	Snohomish	35	5,423
	Whatcom	6	363
Totals		170	26,349
North Central	Chelan	7	182
	Douglas	1	40
	Grant	4	94
Totals		12	316
Olympic	Clallam	4	182
	Grays Harbor	3	102
	Jefferson	4	143
	Kitsap	25	2,493
	Mason	4	125
	Pierce	24	125
	Thurston	7	578
Totals		71	7,232
Southwest	Clark	8	863
	Cowlitz	7	465
	Klickitat	1	19
	Lewis	3	170
	Pacific	1	13
	Skamania	1	30
Totals		21	1,560
South Central	Benton	8	565
	Franklin	1	40
	Yakima	8	376
Totals		17	981
Eastern	Spokane	14	2,167
Totals		14	2,167
Statewide Total		305	38,605

Light Rail Safety Oversight

FTA promulgated a rule that requires states with a rail fixed guideway system to designate a state agency for safety oversight of those systems. These systems, commonly called “light rail,” do not fall under the authority of the Federal Railroad Administration. Governor Locke designated WSDOT to undertake this safety oversight function in October 1997. In 1999, the Washington State Legislature enacted laws affirming this function and outlining responsibilities and guidelines.

WSDOT’s Public Transportation Office is responsible for carrying out the state’s safety oversight function within both federal and state legal constraints. To accomplish this, WSDOT promulgated regulations in Chapter 468-550 in the Washington Administrative Code.

There currently are two light rail systems operating in the state:

- Seattle Waterfront Streetcar, owned and operated by the King County Department of Transportation Metro Transit Division.
- Seattle Monorail, owned by the City of Seattle Seattle Center and operated by Seattle Monorail Services, a subsidiary of RailSafe.

What is WSDOT’s role to improve light rail safety?

Fundamentally, FTA’s rule requires state agencies to provide a framework for improving safety in light rail systems’ operations. WSDOT’s Public Transportation Office:

- Reviews each operator’s “system safety and security program plan.”
- Reviews each operator’s systematic internal audits and conducts triennial audits.
- Receives and reviews annual safety and security reports made by light rail systems, due February 15.
- Submits an annual safety and security report to FTA, due March 15.
- When “reportable” accidents or “unacceptable” hazardous conditions occur, oversees a reporting, investigation, and corrective action process.

There were six reportable incidents in 2001:

- The Seattle Waterfront Streetcar collided with a terminal barrier resulting in 22 people taken to hospital for observation.
- The Seattle Monorail experienced five separate incidents resulting in one passenger each taken to hospital for observation.

Seattle King Street Station

The King Street Station is the Seattle terminus for several Amtrak and Sound Transit passenger rail routes and is served by several King County Metro Transit bus routes. It is south of the financial district, near city hall and the King County Courthouse. It is just east of the Pioneer historical district and west of the International District and near the Seattle Seahawks Football Stadium. The historical building is deteriorating and lacks many amenities appealing to passengers waiting or disembarking. WSDOT has made a priority of rehabilitating this facility and retaining this exceptional location as an intermodal facility.

Services

Washington State Ferries

Washington State Ferries, a division of WSDOT, operates the largest ferry system in North America. The system serves eight Washington State counties as well as Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada. Twenty-five ferries cross Puget Sound and its inland waterways, carrying over 26 million passengers annually to 20 different ports of call.

Amtrak Cascades

WSDOT sponsors Amtrak *Cascades* service in partnership with Amtrak and Oregon. This intercity passenger rail service is designed for longer distance travel as opposed to daily commutes.

In 2001, Amtrak *Cascades* service offered:

- One daily Seattle/Vancouver, BC, round-trip.
- One daily Seattle/Bellingham round-trip.
- Three daily Seattle/Portland round-trips.
- Two daily Portland/Eugene round-trips.

Amtrak *Cascades* ridership totaled 560,381 in 2001. This is a 5.6 percent increase over the year 2000.

Commute Trip Reduction

The Washington State Legislature passed Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) statutes in 1991 to reduce the state's traffic congestion, air pollution, and fuel consumption by changing the way people commute to work. The law (RCW 70.94.551) requires employers of more than 100 people to participate in the CTR Program in nine Washington counties. Through CTR, employers, communities, and WSDOT enter into partnership to improve the efficiency of the transportation system.

Major employers in the nine most populous counties in the state are charged with developing commute programs. Each work site's program is developed by the employer and the local jurisdiction and is tailored for the specific circumstances at their work site. Employees select from a variety of strategies as they develop their program: working from home, walking, bicycling, sharing the ride, riding the bus, and compressing the work week.

Employers encourage their employees to choose an alternative mode in a variety of ways including, making these modes accessible at the site, providing incentives, providing personal assistance in selecting commute alternatives, charging employees for parking, and creating an atmosphere that supports change.

The goals of the program are to increase the capacity of the transportation system to meet the need for personal commutes, reduce the amount of energy used to provide transportation services, and reduce the amount of air pollution generated through transportation.

The program is implemented through local ordinances. A 28-member task force creates implementation guidelines and evaluates the program. The task force includes three representatives each from cities, counties, citizens, and transit; four representatives from state agencies; and 12 employers.

WSDOT supports the program with direct and indirect assistance to mandated employer participants, and also encourages other employers to participate in the program voluntarily. A tax credit was available from 1994 to 1999 as an incentive for non-obligatory participation.

WSDOT contracts with counties and cities to implement their CTR programs. WSDOT also monitors and evaluates the program; provides technical support to counties, jurisdictions, and employers; and analyzes CTR data to identify opportunities for improvements. WSDOT monitors the program's results and reports biennially to the Washington State Legislature on the program's successes.

Since 1993, drive-alone commuting to CTR sites has dropped nearly 10 percent. The change in commute pattern has resulted in taking more than 20,000 vehicles off the roads in Washington State on average workday mornings. In the Puget Sound area, removing these vehicles from the commute has reduced regional morning commute delay by over 6 percent.

Air quality has also improved as 129 million fewer miles were traveled in motor vehicles. This reduction in travel reduced the annual carbon dioxide emissions by over 50,000 tons. Individual commuters saved by not paying for 6.4 million gallons of gasoline.

Through this program, many employers have invested a significant amount of time and money in encouraging their employees to consider methods of commuting other than single-occupant auto use. The

\$4.7 million per year of state and local incentives for this program have triggered an additional \$36 million in program investment per year by employers. The program is providing roadway capacity at about one-third the cost of building and operating new roadways.

Many employers support CTR because of the ancillary benefits they derive from reduced employee commuting. For example, ConneXt in Seattle has cut its office space by 20 percent (equivalent to one floor of the building) through a telework program. The University of Washington has reduced the need for 3,600 parking spaces, a savings valued at more than \$108 million. CH2MHill in Bellevue saves \$73,000 per year through its parking management program, and uses its CTR program to attract and retain valuable employees.

2001 Achievements

As of March 2002, 1,124 employers' work sites were implementing a commute program as part of CTR. The program changes commuters' perceptions about their travel choices, moving away from single-occupant auto travel toward mass transit, carpooling, vanpooling, telecommuting, walking, or biking. From 1993 to 2001, use of mass transit increased by 21.5 percent, carpooling by 21.6 percent, vanpooling by 19.4 percent, telecommuting by 411 percent, walking by 38 percent, and biking by 25.3 percent.

By March 2002, nine counties and 61 cities had ordinances requiring employers to implement some type of commute program.

2002 Objectives

- WSDOT will seek reenactment of the tax credit with new funding.
- To expand the program's success, the 2002 contracts include incentives for trip reduction.

Employer trip reduction targets in the CTR program extend through 2005; if, on average, employers in the CTR program meet their goals, nearly 60,000 fewer vehicles would be competing for commuting space on our highways during the daily morning commute.

Ridesharing

WSDOT's Transportation Demand Management Office purchases vans for long-term leases to local rideshare agencies with vanpool programs and manages a short-term van lease program. This program uses funding from oil rebate revenue through Power Washington and reimbursements from vanpool passengers.

WSDOT's Transportation Demand Management Office provided technical assistance for each of WSDOT's regions with rideshare coordinators. To support them, the office assembled a variety of resources through its Internet web page: www.wsdot.wa.gov/tdm/default.cfm

These resources include:

- A report updated in August 2000, *A TDM Guide for Planners*.
- The Do It Yourself Vanpool Guide, updated in January 1999.
- "Relax. There's More Than One Way To Get There" consumer marketing campaign backed by research data.

Technical Assistance Activities

Annual Public Transportation Conference

WSDOT's Public Transportation Office hosts an annual statewide conference for professional people interested in developments in the public transportation industry. Typically, this conference is in the fall and extends over three days. There are workshops for attendees occurring concurrently — often as many as seven. Historically, it has alternated between sites in eastern and western Washington.

This conference provides an opportunity for:

- Public transportation professionals to share information and coordinate projects and programs.
- Several associations, notably the Washington State Transit Association, Community Transportation Association – Northwest, and Womens' Transportation Seminar, to meet.
- Vendors to display products and equipment.

The 2001 conference was October 8-10, held in Wenatchee. About 400 people attended the conference. The next conference, also in Wenatchee, is scheduled for September 16-18, 2002.

WSDOT's Web Site

WSDOT's Internet gateway is found at www.wsdot.wa.gov. This web site contains details of the agency's programs and projects, commute and travel information, links to related web sites, downloadable plans and reports, and access to information about grants. Commute and travel information can be found on this site at www.wsdot.wa.gov/choices. Public transportation program information can be found at www.wsdot.wa.gov/transit

Public Transportation Phone Directory

WSDOT's Public Transportation Office compiles and publishes a telephone directory relevant to the industry in Washington State. It lists key staff at state and local agencies, their telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses. The directory usually appears annually in February.

Development of New Transit Authorities

WSDOT's Public Transportation Office staff meets with local officials to help improve transit options in those areas of the state. Much of this assistance is associated with Rural Mobility Grant Program recipients in an effort to make them more self-sufficient. However, the inception of the amended transit statutes to permitting cities and transit districts to restrict their services to persons with special needs — elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and persons with low incomes has stimulated new interest in other areas of the state.

For example, Skamania County recently approached the Southwest Washington Regional Planning Council, its regional transportation planning organization, to review better ways to meet the transportation needs of senior citizens and persons with disabilities. WSDOT will be meeting there with interested people to discuss alternatives.

Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP)

The Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) is funded through FTA and offers training, technical assistance, and support to improve the delivery of public transportation services to rural operators. In consultation with rural operators, WSDOT's Public Transportation Office commits Washington State's share of RTAP — \$101,747 in 2001 — to technical assistance projects and training. In addition, WSDOT awards scholarships to local staff to attend state and regional training, including the annual public transportation conference.

WSDOT's Public Transportation Office periodically distributes National RTAP Technical Assistance Briefs. The office also offers an extensive lending library of National RTAP training material, videotape training aids, and other educational and training tools. Larger assistance projects undertaken in 2001 were made to:

- The Community Transportation Association – Northwest to develop professional management; and
- The Washington State Transit Association to support the Washington State Transportation Training Coalition. Membership of the Coalition consists of WSDOT, the Washington State Transit Insurance Pool, the Washington State Transit Association, and the Community Transportation Association – Northwest.
- Island Transit for technical assistance in upgrading its computer system.

Peer Review Program

WSDOT's Public Transportation Office offers the peer review program in partnership with the Washington State Transit Association and the Community Transportation Association of the Northwest. The Peer Review Program is available to all public transportation providers in the state.

Participation is voluntary and is initiated by a request to the WSDOT. In 2000, Intercity Transit requested a peer review of its paratransit operation. WSDOT's Public Transportation Office assembled a team of experts from other systems that performed on-site and off-site reviews of Intercity Transit's services. The peer review team produced a report containing 74 recommendations to save Intercity Transit money and improve performance.

